United States
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Animal and
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Inspection
Service

**National Wildlife
Research Center**

Expanding Research Capabilities Through New Construction

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National Wildlife Research Center Builds New Research Facilities

Wildlife Services' (WS) National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) is the only Federal research facility devoted exclusively to resolving conflicts between people and wildlife through the development of effective, selective, and acceptable methods, tools, and techniques.

Applying Science and Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

Outdoor Pen Project—In the summer of 2001, NWRC began construction on an outdoor animal research facility that will be used to study the behavior of a variety of wildlife species. Now completed, the specialized holding facilities built on 17 acres of Colorado State University (CSU) land, triple the research capacity at NWRC's headquarters in Fort Collins, CO, and greatly enhance the Center's ability to provide solutions to wildlife damage conflicts throughout the United States.

Several of the new holding facilities will be used to study coyote behavior in an effort to reduce livestock predation. The research that will be conducted at NWRC as a result of this construction, will complement coyote research efforts already underway at NWRC's field station in Logan, UT. In addition to testing new technology, such as the radio-activated Electronic Guard, which sounds an alarm designed to scare off coyotes when they approach livestock, NWRC will also be able to test a variety of other livestock mitigation methods. These methods include reproductive inhibitors to reduce coyote populations in specific locations where predation is occurring.

Coyotes, however, are not the only wildlife that will be studied in the new holding facilities. Other structures are being designed to observe skunks, raccoons, badgers, and foxes. Raccoons and skunks are especially known for transmitting rabies and causing property damage and nuisance problems in urban and suburban settings. Smaller holding facilities will be used to conduct rodent research. These pens will be filled with soil to simulate a natural environment where rodents can burrow and forage. Studying these rodents in an outdoor setting, as opposed to a laboratory environ-

ment, will help researchers gain a better understanding of how these animals behave. NWRC scientists will also be able to study birds, such as geese and blackbirds, in a unique 1-acre flight pen covered with netting. Because the netting will allow sunlight into the pen, researchers will be able to grow crops like corn and sunflowers and then release birds into the pen to study how their foraging behavior is affected by certain repellants and attractants.

By having these state-of-the-art research facilities built adjacent to NWRC's Wildlife Science Building and indoor Animal Research Building, scientists will be able to develop attractants, repellants, and other damage management tools and techniques in the laboratory and then test their efficacy in a more controlled outdoor setting before evaluating them in field trials. No other such wildlife research facility exists in the world to study wildlife damage management.

Invasive Species Research Building—In 2003 construction is scheduled to begin on a new APHIS WS Invasive Species Research Building, which will also be located at NWRC's headquarters on the CSU campus in Fort Collins. When completed, the building is expected to include 20,000 square-feet of indoor animal research space. This facility will provide a secure location for researchers to study invasive species that threaten our nation's natural resources and native wildlife. In addition to being non-native, many invasive species also carry parasites and diseases that can impact U.S. agriculture and native wildlife. The design of this new building will ensure that neither the species themselves nor any parasites or diseases they may carry can escape.

The new invasive species facility will create a unique opportunity to study the behavior of non-native species and to develop control measures to reduce their impact on the environment and native wildlife. The need for this research is especially important as international trade and travel continue to increase, introducing more invasive species into the United States. Each year, scientists discover new invasive species that have already become established in the United States. Their impacts can be far reaching. For example, invasive tree frogs, introduced into Hawaii along with shipments of nursery plants from the Caribbean, could have a significant impact on greenhouse plants. The frogs carry parasites that can devastate a variety of plants, including orchids, which are especially prominent in Hawaii. The brown tree snake, accidently introduced into Guam in the late 1940s or early 1950s, has already exterminated most of the island's native forest birds and fruit bats. With this new facility, NWRC scientists will be better able to concentrate their research efforts on invasive reptiles, like the brown tree snake, and other invasive birds, mammals, and amphibians. Examples of invasive species that could be studied at this new research facility include, Quelea birds from Africa, and Polynesian, Roof, and Bandicoot rats from Southeast Asia.

APHIS WS is committed to building research facilities that will permit NWRC to continue its role as a Federal and a world leader in research to reduce wildlife damage and protect American agriculture.